ICARC NEWSLETTER

Jan 2026

Much thanks to the ARRL Foundation
for its support provided to the
ICARC tower and repeater
upgrades at its remote site

Officers for 2026:
President – Bill Robinson, KC3ZAF
Vice President - Joe Rougeux, KD3BCW
Treasurer - Chris Edwards, N3VFK
Secretary - Larry Freeman, N3LT

Board of Directors for 2026
1. Craig Bigler, AB3XA
2. Cass Fitzgerald, N3FLO
3. Ralph Timblin, N3UDI
4. Phil Kopczyk, K3PJ
5. Elmer Sorisio, KB3WG

LOCAL HAPPENINGS

January 3: A great holiday dinner! There were 28 folks in attendance. The food was great and the conversations were stimulating.

January 24, 25, 2026: Winter Field Day

It all started on a cold Winter morning when the temperature was around 4 F at Blue Spruce park in Indiana County, PA. The snow wasn't very deep but the cold was biting at 10:00 AM on January 23, 2026. Eight intrepid ICARC members met in hopes of erecting three wire antennas for Winter Field Day. Earlier in the week (Monday) two ICARC members, Craig Bigler and Cass Fitzgerald were at this site and put two lines, one at each end of the parking lot road in front of the Lodge building, in trees that were separated by over 300 ft. The antenna to be placed there is a 160 - 10 m off-center-fed (OCF) of approximate length 280 ft. It appears to be a daunting task but good planning has won the day and the decision to use a "Messenger Line" to support the wire has insured ultimate success. It was a well thought out and executed plan. In parallel to this effort other members of the group were able to erect a 80-10 m end fed and a G5RV dipole. By the time all antennas were in the air with feed lines, and three ground rods had been pounded into the ground it had taken about five hours. Not long at all; we were out of there by 2:58 PM. It is refreshing to know that there were no cases of frostbite or heart attacks. The following photo shows six of the eight motley crew of crazy misfits who would dare to be out in the woods doing this madness-Left to Right: Bill Robinson-KC3ZAF Phil Kopczyk-K3PJ, Craig Bigler-AB3XA, Joe Rougeux-KD3BCW Dave Dzelsky-N3DZ, Walter Ligas-WA3BDR. Larry Freeman-N3LT is behind the camera. Elmer Sorisio-KB3WG was present but flew the coop before the photo was taken. Although not present this day Cass Fitgerald-N3FLO along with Craig were at this site Monday and got the two end lines in the trees. That saved a lot of time for this days work.

Operations went well on Saturday with a total claimed contacts of 138 between 1:00 PM and 10:30 pm. There were ten operators working the bands throughout the day and evening. Operations ceased around 10:30 PM due to inclement weather moving into the area. A couple of people (Craig Bigler & Joe Rougeux) managed to get the 80 m end fed and G5RV antennas down in the dark of night while others were

packing up equipment. Everything was cleaned up, packed up, and moved out by about 11:15 PM. Operations for Sunday January 25, 2026 were canceled due to the predicted weather, particularly snow and ice, which did, in fact materialize. It was a good decision. The remaining 160 m antenna was taken down the following Tuesday. Although the temperature was about 11 F, all went as hoped. All in all the whole operation went very well and the food was great; every body brought something. We give special thanks to Ms Sandy Bigler for preparing the great big pot of chilewhich was delicious. There was also some home made Cincinnati style chile for hot dogs and brats along with other condiments. Special thanks also go to Mr. Walter Ligas for bringing the Hot Sausage which was very delicious and delightfully stimulating during the evening operations.

We thank and appreciate Mr. Ed Patterson, the Director of Indiana County Parks & Trails, who allowed us the necessary flexibility in using the Blue Spruce park lodge for the event. Many of us remember working outside in the past for this event, so we have a special appreciation for him and his willingness to make it possible for us to work in such a comfortable environment.

Over all, there were around **Fourteen** folks who attended or participated in this event.

The following two charts show how the contacts were distributed between the Modes & Bands and the Operators.

Statistics Graph

Mode	AB3XA	K3PJ	K3VAR	KC3TUU	KC3ZAF	KD3BCW	N3DZ	N3LT	N3UDI	W3BMD	WA3BDR	Tot	Accum
CW			16				1				45	62	62
JS8									34			34	96
LSB	4			4				1				9	105
USB		5	7	1	9	2	3	5		1		33	138
Total	4	5	23	5	9	2	4	6	34	1	45	138	138

Statistics Graph

Band	AB3XA	K3PJ	K3VAR	KC3TUU	KC3ZAF	KD3BCW	N3DZ	N3LT	N3UDI	W3BMD	WA3BDR	Tot	Accum
3.5	1							1				2	2
7	3		1	4					17		18	43	45
14		1	17		9		2		11	1	27	68	113
21		4	5	1		2	1	5	6			24	137
28							1					1	138
Total	4	5	23	5	9	2	4	6	34	1	45	138	138

As seen from the charts CW won the day with the most contacts Special thanks go to Paul Morris-K3VAR and Walter Ligas-WA3BDR for their dedication and stamina, not to mention their persistence in hanging with the, many, difficult potential contacts. They are both very gifted CW operators, and it showed in this event. Dave Dzelsky is another talented cw operator but dedicated himself to mostly logging during this operation, although he bit the bullet and made a few contacts.

One should also note the Digital Mode (JS8) contact numbers (34) for which thanks go to Ralph Timblin-N3UDI . He is the first to use the mode for an ICARC sponsored event; it is a mode that allows real-time keyboard to keyboard communications and is not as popular or well known as digital modes such as FT4, FT8, &PSK 31..etc; all of which have been around longer that JS8. We appreciate Ralph's persistence and dedication for operating many hours to dig out these contacts.

There were a total of 42 phone (USB & LSB) contacts distributed among nine operators and that made up nearly a third of the total contacts. Thank you all for enthusiastically supporting this effort because in the end

the Phone operations tend to be the backbone that ties it all together and provides much of the motivation for any of this happening.

We can't forget those unsung partners who sit next to most of the operators; the loggers. After all, without them, things would be much more chaotic. Good logging makes the operations smooth & fast and we shouldn't take them for granted.

A few photographs follow depicting the operations on Saturday. The photo on the top left shows part of the setup and operating crews. The top right photo shows one of the three staions with an operator and a logger, with a lot of guys standing around pointing out all their mistakes (Not really!). The bottom two photos show the lodge from two different perspectives to give you a sense of the size of the place. Plus it shows all three operating stations; Two along one wall and the other on the opposite wall.

The photo on the left shows the digital operating station with observers, and a yong lady with her back to the camera who is contemplating getting her ham license. The photo on the right shows the messenger line be put in place for the 160-10 m OCF antenna being put into place. alone the lodge building driveway.

The setup and operations for Winter Field Day was a great success, particularly, when considering the nature of the weather for time frame. Hopefully, we all can do it again next year.

NATIONAL HAPPENINGS:

All does not seem well within the "body politic" of the ARRL: There seems to be some dissention amongst the upper echelon as evidenced from the following ARRL Members Only email communications (memberlist@arrl.org):

Subject: **A fairwell to Atlantic division members - it has been an honor to serve**

After serving for some 10 years or so after first being elected as your Vice Director, I am disappointed to report that as of 5 PM today, I have been informed that I will be declared ineligible to continue to hold office as your Atlantic division director under the new massive ethics bylaw voted into being last July by a vote of 10 to 5 directors on our ARRL board. I wish to make clear I am not resigning, I am being removed without my consent by the application of the new code of conduct rules passed in July of 2025.

This should come as no surprise to members following the ongoing struggle within our Board to impose compliance with the majority's sense of what ethical responsibilities each member of the board must exhibit. By passage of the new bylaws, the rules now limit or prohibit a director's ability to advise his division of matter involving important board decisions without advance permission. Per these rules it now appears that anything of any importance is to be for the

boards' eyes only. Our league is not in competition with other businesses - we have traditionally been supportive of all other amateur radio endeavors. That history has evolved now.

Over the last several years, League followers have seen the struggle of what members have labeled as the transparency party verses the confidentiality party as a shorthand for the governance divide which has plagued the ARRL.

The majority of our Directors, sometimes referred to as the Shadow Board by commentators and League followers, has decided that the governance of our League is not something the members need to concern themselves with. Our League was founded as a representative democracy - which until recently was clearly stated on the League's website - wherein the members of a given division elect those directors to represent their interest primarily in our membership based non-profit institution.

Our League members' values should be paramount. Elected directors' primary duty is to the members. Directors obligation to the members never has been and cannot be inconsistent to their statutory duty to members. Unfortunately, now the majority of the board's directors have chosen to prioritize a director's obligation to a corporate entity in degradation of a director's obligations to the League's members.

Before the vote to enact a sweeping, ambiguous ethics code incorporating over 100 pages of requirements by reference, I was provided with only 12 minutes to question our corporate lawyer on what I was told was her approval of and assistance in drafting the changes. That turned out be misinformation according to answers she provided me. The lawyer admitted she was not asked to opine on the legality of the new bylaws, but only whether it was legal to pass the bylaws. While it was permissible to pass the new bylaws, they are still contrary to the state statutes defining a director cannot be removed except by the members of his division.

I was also pleasantly surprised when the corporate lawyer admitted that a director's duty was, at least, 50% owed to the best interest of the members, not 100% to the corporation as argued by the appointed ethics rules committee of directors orchestrating the officious intermeddling resulting in the new Bylaw 18 and Bylaw(s) 42/46.

The sweeping changes created by the passage of the new bylaws permits these bylaws to be weaponize to remove directors who are in the minority on any issue. You will notice that most directors voting, when role call voting is allowed, is typically a 10 to 5 majority vote in favor of restricting information from members as confidential unless released in writing by the President or CEO. Confidentiality is sometimes necessary, but usually most thing which ARRL does is not. Absent special circumstances, basic information and policy decision details and plans for the future should be available to our members. Of, by and for the radio amateur was founder Maxim's motto.

Based upon the promises and obligations I have made to you, I regret I cannot in good conscience sign the new director's oath of confidentiality that is now demanded by the new bylaws. My interpretation of the new rules and required confidentiality agreement and that of other lawyers I have consulted, contradicts with my obligations under Connecticut law to you. I recommend members read the entirety of the different, contradictory promises a director must agree to and decide for yourself whether they are in the best interest of members.

For a comprehensive and scholarly legal analysis of these issues, search for the white paper reviews drafted by a past director and a past chairman of the Ethics and Election Committee, attorney Fred Hopengarten, K1VR. They had been circulated widely. They point out the absurdity of the new rules. Other nationally recognized non-profit lawyers who are League members agree as well.

Our past 1st Vice President, also an attorney, Mike Raisbeck, K1TWF, drafted an eloquent critic of the downward turn in League politics as his final report to the board January 2024. Mike's report is worth reading and foretells of the issues we face now. It is not available at our League website but also made it out into the wild.

I regret that I cannot execute a statement which I know to be ill-advised, violative of my obligations to you and contrary to my duties under the applicable law governing a membership based corporation.

I urge you to support our Vice Director Marty Newingham AG3I who likely will assume the position of Director now. He has my confidence and I know he has your best interest in mind. It has been a true honor to represent you all as your Atlantic division director. I continue my support of Amateur Radio- always.

73, and I will see you on the radio.

Bob Famiglio, K3RF

ARRL Atlantic Division
Director: Robert B Famiglio, K3RF
k3rf@arrl.org

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Announcements:
Remember the upcoming ICARC meeting on Tue, Feb 3, 2026, 6:30 pm at the Indiana, PA Eat 'n Park Restaurant.

All Regular outdoor events have been canceled due to poor weather through the Winter months.

Pledges to the Grant Fund by ICARC Members: $1720.00, Collected to date: $1400.00

It is membership renewal time so a membership form is attached to the end of this document. Remember that you may also renew from the W3BMD website at https://www.qsl.net/w3bmd/

The video links for the old tower take down are given below:

Links for Tower Take-down

Courtesy of Deryl Mack , KC3YZW

https://youtu.be/c1LG7SRu9b0

https://youtu.be/risblzrA_hY

https://youtu.be/zCV7vwqTMjk

Another Interesting Mode of Operation on the Rise:
There is a newer, digital weak signal mode of operation that that seems to be catching on:VARAC
It is a interesting mode in that unlike FT-8 and other modes it can ALMOST be conversational in that you can communicate keyboard-keyboard by typing your message and sending it as soon as you are done typing. There is no timed structure to the sequence. I suspect that many of you who do a good bit of FT-8 and FT-4 may be familiar with this. In any case take a look at the home page, you may find it interesting too. I've downloaded it but not yet tried it. Explore the home page at: https://www.varac-hamradio.com/

Reminder: The ICARC Public Service and Information Net happens on each Monday night starting at 8:30 PM using the W3BMD repeater on 146.910/146.310 MHz. (ICARC is an ARRL affliated club). There will often be a second net starting immediately following the primary net with the W3BMD/2 repeater, on 146.655/.055 MHz located at ICARC's Remote site. (Tones for both are 131.8 Hz)

Reminder: The ICARC meetings are, generally, scheduled for the FIRST Tuesday of each month.

Current Net Control Operators: Phil Kopczyk, Chris Edwards, and Ralph Timblin. We thank you fellows very much. We can always use more.

Attention Technician and General licensees (and prospective hams), have you thought about upgrading? Do you have trouble making it to an in-person ham exam? Now you don't have that excuse. Groups holding online ham exams have greatly expanded. Some groups are having exams daily. Reportedly it is an easy process if you have a laptop, desktop or tablet with a camera and microphone. Below are websites where you can look into testing online.

https://wm7x.net/ One of the most popular. They have videos explaining how it's done.
https://kl7aa.org/vex/remote-testing/
https://hamstrung/sessions/remote Lists remote and in person test sessions.

ICARC Minutes Dec 2, 2025

Attendance: AB3XA, N3VFK, N3LT, KA2YOS, K3PJ, N3ARA, KC3ZAF, KB3WG,W3CDH, N3UDI,WB3DUD, K3VAR, KD4BCW

Call to Order- Time: 1830 hours by President Craig Bigler
Pledge of Allegiance: done, **Roll Call**: done

Treasurer's Report: Chris Edwards reports that total available funds in Maintenance and Checking accounts is $2,905.68.

Trustee's Report: Elmer reported that the new antenna, initially, did not work well so it was taken down and found to have fallen apart within the fiberglass shell It was repaired and remounted on the tower. It is now working well. The new repeater on 146.655/.055 MHz at the remote site and the 146.910/.310 MHz & 444.975/449.975 MHz repeaters at the EMA center are working.

Secretary's Report: Larry Freeman reports that the grant account now has a balance of $4189.29 remaining Larry also reported that he had applied for an extension to the grant of 4 months but has received no word on its approval or disapproval as of today's date. He further commented that the tone of the email response to his request seemed positive in that the response to him asked if 6 months would be enough.

Election of 2026 Officers: Larry nominated Bill Robinson for President and he accepted, seconded by Chris Edwards. No opposition. Voted upon and affirmed.

Joe Rougeux volunteered for the position of Vice President. It was voted upon and passed.

Chris Edwards volunteered for the position of Treasurer. It was voted upon and passed.

2026 ICARC President is Bill Robinson (KC3ZAF), Vice President is Joe Rougeux (KD3BCW), Treasurer is Chris Edwards (N3VFK).

Larry indicated that he did not want to be Secretary, but will be willing to help the new person. Craig and others emphasized the need for a Secretary to properly operate and brought up the possibility of using quality recordings and AI to help with writing minutes and record keeping of the meetings. Larry made a motion to defer the election of a Secretary to the January meeting. This was seconded and voted upon and passed.

New Board Members: Bill Robinson, Ralph Timblin (N3UDI)

Other discussions: Winter Field day discussions were started and it was suggested that three radios and three antennas be put in place. Craig pointed out that the Blue Spruce Lodge is already reserved and that "unofficial" permission was granted for overnight stays at last years WFD. Several persons indicated that they would like to participate and help. Setup will be on Jan 23, Operations will be on Jan 24 & 25 with take down occurring on Jan 25 as soon as ops cease. Craig, also spoke some on the various multipliers with a possible maximum of 33. The discussions will continue at the January meeting of ICARC.

The Secretary, indicated that he would contact Hoss's Restaurant in Indiana to set up the ICARC annual holiday dinner for sometime in January.

Good of the Order: There was some discussion of what other clubs were doing such as "trivia nets" on their repeaters. Some suggested that ICARC maybe should start such a net. Larry suggested an HF net perhaps with cw practice as a main goal. Craig suggested that we do a range test on the 146.655 MHz repeater. There was some discussion of the hard work done on the tower anchors and the signal strengths at some locations.

Adjournment-Time: Motion made and seconded. All voted to adjourn at 19:30 hours.

Program: After the formal meeting there was a very nice presentation by Paul Morris, K3VAR on using the ARRL QSL Bureau. It was very educational and lasted approximately 25 minutes.

Indiana County Amateur Radio Club
Membership Application

CURRENT DATE (M/D/Y): / / Membership Status(I,A,S,F): New_____ Ongoing_____

Individual Membership (I) — $35.00 **Associate/Student Membership (A, S) —** $20.00
Family Membership (F) – $50.00 {Two voting members per family}

***** Please complete the applicable information below: *****

Name:_____ DOB:_____ (Year Optional)

Call: _____ Class:_____ARRL:____FISTS:____ARES:___RACES:___

Other:_____ DOB:_____ (Year Optional)

Call:_____ Class:_____ ARRL:___FISTS:____ARES:____RACES:___

Other:_____ DOB:_____ (Year Optional)

Call:_____ Class:_____ARRL:___FISTS:____ARES:____RACES:___

Address: _____City:_____ St:_____Zip:_____

Phone: _____ Other Phone: _____

Email: _____Other Email: _____

Do you belong to A.R.E.S. / R.A.C.E.S. of another County, if so which one: _____

Is it OK to put your name onto the R.A.C.E.S / A.R.E.S. emergency call list? Yes___ No___

Are you a member of the ARRL? Yes_____ No_____

Signature_____ Date _____

Please return this form along with a check or money order payable to ICARC, to:

Indiana County Amateur Radio Club
Attn: Treasurer
PO Box 2020
Indiana, PA 15701

Date Received _____ Amount $_____ (Cash) (Check) (MO) Number _____

The club info & newsletter is available on our web site at: www.qsl.net/w3bmd